



## DON'T FORGET FIDO AND FLUFFY

### CREATING A DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN FOR YOUR PETS

Most Americans think of their pets as members of their families. But when it comes to disaster preparedness, how many of us have considered how we'll safeguard our pets?

While you probably have emergency supplies set aside for the *people* in your family – water, non-perishable food, radios and flashlights with extra batteries, a first aid kit – it's important to include provisions for your pets as well. The following checklist is a great place to start:

- ✓ **A week's worth of water for each pet.** Make sure the water is stored out of the sun and rotate the supply four times a year to avoid the growth of bacteria.
- ✓ **Bleach or water purification tablets.** (In case available tap water is not potable.)
- ✓ **One week's worth of your pet's regular food.** If your pet eats primarily canned food, make sure to include a can opener and plastic lid for the opened can.
- ✓ **Pet carrier.** A fiberglass or metal carrier is preferable as a cardboard carrier may not be able to withstand the strain of the situation.
- ✓ **Collar and tags.** Consider keeping two sets of tags on your pet's collar in case one set gets lost. You might also include a blank tag on which you can write an emergency phone number in case your regular phone isn't working. If your pet has a microchip, make sure you've registered the chip with the company.
- ✓ **Chain leash.** Chain leashes are the strongest, and therefore the best choice if you have a strong pet. A stressful or chaotic situation may change your pet's disposition and make him more difficult than usual to control.
- ✓ **Medical records and one week's worth of medication.** Keep the supply and the record of your pet's shots and medical issues current. You may need proof of shots in order for your pet to be admitted to a shelter.
- ✓ **Recent photos of your pet with family members.** If your pet is lost, photos are crucial for creating "lost" posters. They can also help you prove ownership.
- ✓ **Familiar items.** To calm your pet in a traumatic situation, it will help to have a familiar toy, bed or even one of your sweatshirts on hand.
- ✓ **Sanitation supplies.** Have a small box and litter for cats and pooper-scooper and plastic bags for cleaning up after your dog.
- ✓ **A list of locations that will board pets in an emergency.** State and federal agencies have disallowed the Red Cross from accepting any pets (other than service animals such as seeing eye dogs) into shelters. Finding suitable locations beforehand is especially important for people with exotic pets (snakes, lizards, etc.) as not all kennels and shelters are prepared to accept them.

With a little preparation, you can increase the likelihood of your pet surviving a disaster. So stop putting it off – start your disaster plan for your pet today!

(continued)

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